

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division
Zoning Amendment (Rezoning), Conditional Use Permit, Variances, Site Plan Review
BZZ-3284

Date: November 27, 2006

Applicant: Lyn-Lake Development Partners, LLC

Address of Property: A large portion of 2900 Aldrich Ave S

Project Name: Aldrich Apartments – North Building

Contact Person and Phone: Gretchen Camp, (612) 373-9122

Planning Staff and Phone: Tara Beard, (612) 673-2351

Date Application Deemed Complete: October 13, 2006

End of 60-Day Decision Period: December 12, 2006

End of 120-Day Decision Period: The applicant was sent a letter on October 18, 2006 extending the decision period to February 10, 2007.

Ward: 10 **Neighborhood Organization:** Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association, adjacent to Calhoun Area Residents Action Group

Existing Zoning: I1 Light Industrial District

Proposed Zoning: R6 Multiple Family District

Zoning Plate Number: 24

Legal Description of Property Proposed for Rezoning: The land referred to is situated in the State of Minnesota, County of Hennepin, and is described as follows:

2900 Aldrich Ave S

Lot 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and lot 6, Block 18, Windom's Addition to Minneapolis

Please note, the concurrent applications BZZ-3283 and PL-207 show that only a portion of Lot 6, Block 18, Windom's Addition to Minneapolis is intended for use of this project.

Lot area: 32,246 square feet

Proposed Use: A residential development including 98 new dwelling units and underground parking.

Concurrent Review:

- Rezone a large portion of 2900 Aldrich Ave S from I1 to R6.
- A Conditional Use Permit to allow 98 new dwelling units.
- A Variance to reduce the minimum front yard from 15 to 3 feet.
- A Variance to reduce the minimum corner side yard along W 29th St from 18 feet to 10 feet.
- A Variance to reduce the minimum interior side yard along the public alley from 15 to 1 foot.
- A Variance to reduce the Minimum Lot Area from 336 sq. ft. per dwelling unit (with a density bonus) to 329 sq. ft. per dwelling unit, a 2% reduction.
- Site Plan Review

Applicable zoning code provisions: Chapter 525: Article VI Zoning Amendments, Article VII Conditional Use Permits, Article IX Variances; Chapter 530 Site Plan Review.

Background: The applicant, Lyn Lake Development Partners, LLC, is proposing a new multi-family residential building on the majority of the current address of 2900 Aldrich Ave S. This proposal is in conjunction with another project immediately south that will have mixed-uses and will share underground parking with the building at 2900 Aldrich Ave S.

Currently on the site is an industrial warehouse built in 1967. The applicant is proposing to demolish this building to allow the construction of a 6-story residential building above underground parking. The site faces 29th St W and the Midtown Greenway to the north. The building would step back from the greenway; it is four stories closest to the greenway and steps up to 5 and 6 stories toward the south end of the site.

Public Works has required a discretionary Travel Demand Management Plan for the site. A draft of that plan has been provided to planning staff and is attached to this report. The application drawings show a curb cut proposed off 29th St W leading to underground parking, but the applicant has indicated that they are now pursuing a plan that doesn't include a curb cut on this site, but rather uses an easement agreement with the South Building to access the parking that is underneath both sites from the South Building's property, off Aldrich Ave S. Loading and trash pick-up is proposed off the alley.

The proposed development includes multiple courtyards and balconies throughout both buildings, including a shared courtyard between the buildings at ground level and a ground level courtyard just for the North Building that creates a U-shaped footprint for the building. The fifth floor units offer lofts that create the 6th story on the building's elevation.

At the time of the writing of this report staff has received one letter, from the Midtown Greenway Coalition. The applicant has indicated that they have met with the neighborhood and the Midtown Greenway Coalition prior to submitting applications.

ZONING AMENDMENT -

Required Findings for a zoning amendment:

1. **Whether the amendment is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan.**

While neither Aldrich Ave S nor W 29th St are community or commercial corridors, the site is located one block west of Lyndale Ave S, a commercial corridor, and half a block north of W Lake St, also a commercial corridor. Furthermore, the intersection of W Lake St and Lyndale Ave S is an Activity Center and the Midtown Greenway corridor is a major housing site. The following policies in *The Minneapolis Plan* apply:

Activity Centers are places with high levels of residential, employment, and commercial activity. Chapter 4.7 of *The Minneapolis Plan* states: “Minneapolis will identify and support Activity Centers by preserving the mix and intensity of land uses and enhancing the design features of each area that give it a unique and urban character.” One of the implementation steps for this policy is to “develop parking facilities and management strategies that accommodate high customer demand, promote shared facilities and minimize visual impact and adverse effects on pedestrian and sidewalk traffic.” This project would share parking with the South Building, which includes commercial uses and commercial parking. Designing the buildings to share parking facilities and one entrance minimizes pedestrian impact.

Another implementation step of section 4.7 of *The Minneapolis Plan* is to “require that buildings in Activity Center districts incorporate a pedestrian orientation at the street edge.” The applicant is requesting front yard setback variances to bring the building closer to the street edge than is required, and units facing the street on the first floor have individual entrances and porches or patios oriented to the street edge.

Chapter 4.9 of *The Minneapolis Plan* states: “Minneapolis will grow by increasing its supply of housing. One of the implementation steps for this policy is to “support the development of new medium- and high-density housing in appropriate locations throughout the City.” As a part of a major housing site, the high-density housing proposed at this site is appropriate.

Chapter 4.17 of *The Minneapolis Plan* states: “Minneapolis will promote housing development that supports a variety of housing types at designated Major Housing Sites throughout the city.” One implementation step for this policy is to “concentrate new housing developments in close proximity to amenities or in locations where value will be sustained over time.” The site is less than a half block from the Lyn-Lake Activity Center and close to multiple amenities, such as retail, transit, the Greenway, and employment. Another implementation plan for chapter 4.17 is to “develop a citywide Housing Strategy for placing medium (10-30 units per acre) to high-density (30+units per acre) new housing on major transportation and transit corridors and near commercial revitalization projects or neighborhood amenities (e.g. sites such as Growth Centers, Major Housing Sites, Commercial Corridors)”. At 132 dwelling units per acre, the proposed project is considered very high density and is adjacent to multiple amenities.

Finally, this project is in or near the study area of two major Small Area Plans. The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan is currently under public review and includes the site; the Uptown Small Area Plan is a current planning project that ends just west of the site at Bryant Ave S. A Small Area Plan for the Lyn-Lake area is planned for the future.

2. Whether the amendment is in the public interest and is not solely for the interest of a single property owner.

The rezoning is in the interest of the public as it will allow for the transition of an industrial site to a residential site where city policies support it. The site is not in an Industrial Business Park Opportunity Area designated by the recently approved Industrial Land Use and Employment Policy Plan to be prioritized for industrial uses.

3. Whether the existing uses of property and the zoning classification of property within the general area of the property in question are compatible with the proposed zoning classification, where the amendment is to change the zoning classification of particular property.

R6 zoning along a major housing site is appropriate. The site is adjacent to other Light Industrial zoning, as well as existing and proposed C3A zoning. It is also across a public alley from C4 zoning. It is near (across the Greenway and a half block to the west) other R6 zoning, and also near high-density residential dwelling units in the existing C3A district.

4. Whether there are reasonable uses of the property in question permitted under the existing zoning classification, where the amendment is to change the zoning classification of particular property.

The existing zoning classification allows primarily industrial uses, and no residential. For a Major Housing site near other high-density residential and commercial uses, industrial zoning is no longer appropriate.

5. Whether there has been a change in the character or trend of development in the general area of the property in question, which has taken place since such property was placed in its present zoning classification, where the amendment is to change the zoning classification of particular property.

Development pressure in the general area has been high. New high-density apartments of a similar scale have recently gone up in the area. The character of the area as a high-activity area with many different types of amenities has remained stable for some time. The challenge faced by the area as it grows is to keep it a viable option for residential and commercial activities for a wide variety of people.

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT -

Required Findings for the Conditional Use Permit to allow 98 new dwelling units at 2900 Aldrich Ave S:

1. Will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort or general welfare.

There is no evidence that creating 98 new dwelling units will adversely affect the public health, safety, comfort or general welfare. A residential use will increase the human activity on the site, and the scale of the use is not dissimilar from nearby residential buildings. Windows, porches, and balconies façade will increase visibility from the site to the surrounding area, including the Midtown Greenway.

2. **Will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the vicinity and will not impede the normal or orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.**

The proposed development should not have a negative impact on other property in the vicinity, which includes industrial uses, surface parking lots, and commercial space.

3. **Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, necessary facilities or other measures, have been or will be provided.**

Access to the parking is currently shown off W 29th St, but the applicant has indicated that they will consolidate access to the underground parking to one curb cut off Aldrich Ave S, on the adjacent proposal's property. Drainage is being mitigated with a stormwater management plan. The project underwent Preliminary Development Review (PDR) on November 1, 2006, and the applicant is working with Public Works toward PDR approval.

While two additional units are a small proportion of the total new units proposed, R6 zoning does allow high-density residential development and the use of a 20% density bonus further increases the need of the building for utilities, roads, and other facilities. Staff recommends approving a CUP for only the number of dwelling units that is permitted with the density bonus.

4. **Adequate measures have been or will be provided to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.**

All required parking is provided underground. The proposed curb cut is located in an appropriate location that can sustain projected amounts of traffic. As recommended by the Travel Demand Management Plan (TDMP), transit incentives are proposed for residents and patrons of the development to further mitigate projected increases in traffic.

While two additional units are a small proportion of the total new units proposed, R6 zoning does allow high-density residential development and the use of a 20% density bonus further increases the impact of the development on traffic. Staff recommends approving a CUP for only the number of dwelling units that is permitted with the density bonus.

5. **Is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan.**

See finding #1 of the Zoning Amendment.

6. **And, does in all other respects conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located upon approval of this conditional use permit.**

In addition to a Zoning Amendment to change from I1 to R6 zoning and the conditional use permit for new dwelling units, the applicant is requesting three yard variances, a site plan review, and a minimum lot area variance. With a 20% density bonus for providing all parking underground, the project is allowed 336 sq. ft. of lot area per dwelling units, or 96 units. The applicant is requesting 98 units. As explained in the variance findings below, staff is not recommending approval of the minimum lot area variance. Therefore, staff recommends approving the conditional use permit for up to 96 new dwelling units, which meets the minimum lot area requirement.

VARIANCES -

Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code for the Variance to reduce the minimum front yard at 2900 Aldrich Ave S from 15 to 3 feet.

- 1. The property cannot be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed and strict adherence to the regulations of this zoning ordinance would cause undue hardship.**

The applicant is requesting a setback variance to allow the building to relate to the proposed South Building (which does not need a front yard variance and is in a Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District) and the new apartment buildings on the east side of Aldrich Ave S, which are closer than 3 feet from the lot line along Aldrich. The building wall is 10 feet from the property line and private patios are located up to 3 feet from the property line along Aldrich. Meeting the required front yard for the district would reduce the connection of the first floor units with the pedestrian realm. The urban nature of the Lyn-Lake area and the location of the site in an Activity Center, where buildings are encouraged to follow traditional urban form create a hardship for meeting the front yard setback for the R6 district.

- 2. The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land for which the variance is sought and have not been created by any persons presently having an interest in the property. Economic considerations alone shall not constitute an undue hardship if reasonable use for the property exists under the terms of the ordinance.**

The area that creates the context for the site was not created by the applicant. The applicant is requesting a zoning district that creates the front yard requirement, but staff agrees that R6 zoning is appropriate for the site.

- 3. The granting of the variance will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity.**

The spirit and intent of the ordinance in question is in part to create consistent build walls in residential areas and protect residential spaces from the public realm. In this case, the building walls of the surrounding areas suggest a reduced front yard is appropriate, and the urban context of the area reduces the need to protect individual dwelling units from the public realm.

- 4. The proposed variance will not substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.**

The variance would have no impact on traffic congestion or fire and safety standards.

Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code for the Variance to reduce the minimum corner side yard along W 29th St from 18 feet to 10 feet.

- 1. The property cannot be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed and strict adherence to the regulations of this zoning ordinance would cause undue hardship.**

The applicant is requesting a setback variance to allow private patios for walk up units that face W 29th St. The building wall is 17 feet 8 inches from the property line and the private patios extend another 7 feet into the corner side yard. Because of the urban nature of the area and the building, private patios are an important element for individual residences. While the proposed patios would be permitted if they were smaller, as the only private outdoor space for these units a larger size is reasonable.

- 2. The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land for which the variance is sought and have not been created by any persons presently having an interest in the property. Economic considerations alone shall not constitute an undue hardship if reasonable use for the property exists under the terms of the ordinance.**

City policies indicate that high density housing is preferred in this location. These policies were not created by the applicant. Meeting this density requirement has lead to some design decisions that would reduce the corner side yard.

- 3. The granting of the variance will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity.**

The spirit and intent of the ordinance in question is in part to create consistent build walls in residential areas. The placement of buildings along W 29th St varies as the area has changed with the creation of the Midtown Greenway and the increased redevelopment in the Lyn-Lake area. New buildings that face the Midtown Greenway are encourages getting eyes on the Greenway without shadowing it. Decreasing the corner side yard along W 29th St while stepping the building up as it gets further from the greenway helps accomplish these goals. To ensure that final plans uphold this concept, staff recommends requiring that the building step back from the Greenway as a condition of approval.

- 4. The proposed variance will not substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.**

The variance would have no impact on traffic congestion or fire and safety standards.

Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code for the Variance to reduce the minimum interior side yard along the public alley from 15 to 1 foot.

- 1. The property cannot be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed and strict adherence to the regulations of this zoning ordinance would cause undue hardship.**

The applicant has designed the building with an interior courtyard so that all units will have access to light and air from either a courtyard or facing street frontage. The courtyard is set back more than 50 feet from the alley, and the units that wrap around the courtyard extend into the rear yard. Other buildings in the area, both residential and otherwise, are built up to the alley as the Lyn-Lake area is urban in nature.

- 2. The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land for which the variance is sought and have not been created by any persons presently having an interest in the property. Economic considerations alone shall not constitute an undue hardship if reasonable use for the property exists under the terms of the ordinance.**

The decision to create a courtyard is the applicants, but it provides an amenity that is important to high density residential development. The design of the building is such that units along the alley will have access to light and air via interior courtyards.

- 3. The granting of the variance will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity.**

The intent of the ordinance is to provide a setback for residential buildings with windows facing an interior side or rear yard where a building could be built along the property line on an adjacent parcel. The alley adjacent to the property line is 12 feet wide; enough to provide necessary distance between the proposed building and an existing building across the alley that is also built up to the alley.

- 4. The proposed variance will not substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.**

The variance would have no impact on traffic congestion or fire and safety standards. The required distance for fire safety would be preserved even if the alley were vacated, as half the alley would accrue to the proposed development.

Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code for the Variance to reduce the minimum lot area from 336 sq. ft. per dwelling unit (with a density bonus) to 329 sq. ft. per dwelling unit, a 2% reduction.

- 1. The property cannot be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed and strict adherence to the regulations of this zoning ordinance would cause undue hardship.**

Taking advantage of the 20% density bonus for providing all required parking underground, the applicant can create up to 96 new dwelling units without varying the minimum lot area. The applicant is proposing 98 new dwelling units. The zoning code is reasonable in that it allows very high residential density in the R6 district, particularly when considering the applicable bonus. Therefore, 96 new dwelling units is a reasonable use and there is no hardship created by reducing the new number of units by two.

- 2. The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land for which the variance is sought and have not been created by any persons presently having an interest in the property. Economic considerations alone shall not constitute an undue hardship if reasonable use for the property exists under the terms of the ordinance.**

Staff has found no unique circumstance that justifies two units beyond what is permitted. The applicant has indicated that market trends are dictating the need for smaller units, which is why the proposed building meets the required Floor Area Ratio but still needs a variance for the number of units proposed. Market trends are essentially an economic consideration and do not substantiate the need for two additional units.

- 3. The granting of the variance will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity.**

The intent of the ordinance is to ensure that a site is not overburdened with too many dwelling units. Smaller units in the same size building leads to more units, which requires more demand for parking, utilities, and amenities. The minimal size of the reduction request indicates that such an increase in demand would also be minimal; however, density allowed in R6 districts, including a 20% density bonus, is already quite high.

- 4. The proposed variance will not substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.**

The variance would slightly increase congestion because of the additional residents in the building; but no fire or safety issues are apparent as a result of the additional units.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Findings as Required By the Minneapolis Zoning for Site Plan Review

Required Findings for Site Plan Review

- a. The site plan conforms to all applicable standards of Chapter 530, Site Plan Review. (See Section A Below for Evaluation.)**

- b. The site plan conforms to all applicable regulations of the zoning ordinance and is consistent with applicable policies of the comprehensive plan and applicable small area plans adopted by the city council. (See Section B Below for Evaluation.)

Section A: Conformance with Chapter 530 of Zoning Code

BUILDING PLACEMENT AND FAÇADE:

- Placement of the building shall reinforce the street wall, maximize natural surveillance and visibility, and facilitate pedestrian access and circulation.
- First floor of the building shall be located not more than eight (8) feet from the front lot line (except in C3S District or where a greater yard is required by the zoning ordinance). If located on corner lot, the building wall abutting each street shall be subject to this requirement.
- The area between the building and the lot line shall include amenities.
- The building shall be oriented so that at least one (1) principal entrance faces the public street. In the case of a corner lot, the principal entrance shall face the front lot line.
- Except in the C3S District, on-site accessory parking facilities shall be located to the rear or interior of the site, within the principal building served, or entirely below grade.
- For new construction, the building walls shall provide architectural detail and shall contain windows as required by Chapter 530 in order to create visual interest and to increase security of adjacent outdoor spaces by maximizing natural surveillance and visibility.
- In larger buildings, architectural elements, including recesses or projections, windows and entries, shall be emphasized to divide the building into smaller identifiable sections.
- Blank, uninterrupted walls that do not include windows, entries, recesses or projections, or other architectural elements, shall not exceed twenty five (25) feet in length.
- Exterior materials shall be durable, including but not limited to masonry, brick, stone, stucco, wood, metal, and glass.
- The exterior materials and appearance of the rear and side walls of any building shall be similar to and compatible with the front of the building.
- The use of plain face concrete block as an exterior material shall be prohibited fronting along a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or adjacent to a residence or office residence district.
- Entrances and windows:
 - Residential uses:

Principal entrances shall be clearly defined and emphasized through the use of architectural features such as porches and roofs or other details that express the importance of the entrance. Multiple entrances shall be encouraged. Twenty (20) percent of the walls on the first floor and ten (10) percent of the walls on each floor above the first that face a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or on-site parking lot, shall be windows as follows:

 - a. Windows shall be vertical in proportion.
 - b. Windows shall be distributed in a more or less even manner.
 - Nonresidential uses:

Principal entrances shall be clearly defined and emphasized through the use of architectural features such as roofs or other details that express the importance of the entrance. Multiple entrances shall be encouraged. Thirty (30) percent of the walls on the first floor and ten (10) percent of the walls on each floor above the first that face a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or on-site parking lot, shall be windows as follows:

 - a. Windows shall be vertical in proportion.
 - b. Windows shall be distributed in a more or less even manner.
 - c. The bottom of any window used to satisfy the ground floor window requirement may not be more than four (4) feet above the adjacent grade.
 - d. First floor or ground floor windows shall have clear or lightly tinted glass with a visible light transmittance ratio of 0.6 or higher.
 - e. First floor or ground floor windows shall allow views into and out of the building at eye level. Shelving, mechanical equipment or other similar fixtures shall not block views into and out of the building in the area between four (4) and seven (7) feet above the adjacent grade.

However, window area in excess of the minimum required area shall not be required to allow views into and out of the building.

- f. Industrial uses in Table 550-1, Principal Industrial Uses in the Industrial Districts, may provide less than thirty (30) percent windows on the walls that face an on-site parking lot, provided the parking lot is not located between the building and a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway.

Minimum window area shall be measured as indicated in section 530.120 of the zoning code.

- The form and pitch of roof lines shall be similar to surrounding buildings.
- **Parking Garages:** The exterior design shall ensure that sloped floors do not dominate the appearance of the walls and that vehicles are screened from view. At least thirty (30) percent of the first floor building wall that faces a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway shall be occupied by active uses, or shall be designed with architectural detail or windows, including display windows, that create visual interest.

Conformance:

- The applicant is redeveloping the entire west side of this block of Aldrich Ave S. The two new buildings proposed will create a more or less consistent street wall with private patios off first floor walk up units that will increase visibility and surveillance on the site.
- The building is on a corner lot. The building is proposed at 10 feet from the front lot line and just over 17 feet from the corner side lot line. These distances are reductions from the required yards (see variance findings).
- Amenities between the building and the lot line include landscaping and patios.
- Principal entrances to both the lobby and walk up units are provided off Aldrich Ave S. Principal entrances to walk up units and a common hallway are provided off W 29th St.
- All parking is proposed to be located in a two level underground structure.
- The building uses recesses and projections, as well as windows and materials, to make the building understandable in smaller sections.
- Blank wall conditions are shown on the top two floors of the north elevation. Staff recommends as a condition of approval that the applicant use windows and architectural details or materials to bring those conditions in compliance.
- Materials include metal, cement fiber board panel with stucco finish, and brick. The materials are used similarly on each elevation.
- Windows are required on 30% of the first floor and 10% of each floor above the first floor for two sides of the building because they face a public street. The proposed windows provided are as follows:

- Aldrich Ave S (East) Elevation

- 1st floor facing a public street: 30% required, 49% provided
- 2nd floor facing a public street: 10% required, 30% provided
- 3rd floor facing a public street: 10% required, 33% provided
- 4th floor facing a public street: 10% required, 32% provided
- 5th floor facing a public street: 10% required, 25% provided
- 6th floor facing a public street: 10% required, 30% provided

- W 29th St (North) Elevation

- 1st floor facing a public street: 30% required, 46% provided
- 2nd floor facing a public street: 10% required, 45% provided
- 3rd floor facing a public street: 10% required, 45% provided
- 4th floor facing a public street: 10% required, 49% provided
- 5th floor facing a public street: 10% required, 1% provided

- 6th floor facing a public street: 10% required, 3% provided

It appears from the 5th and 6th floor plans that windows could be used to both increase fenestration on the north elevation and break up what is currently blank wall exceeding 25 feet. Staff recommends requiring the applicant to meet the 10% fenestration requirement as a condition of approval on the 5th and 6th floors of the north elevation.

- Plain-face concrete block is not proposed as an exterior material for any part of the building.
- The existing roof is flat, similar to nearby multi-family residential buildings.

ACCESS AND CIRCULATION:

- Clear and well-lighted walkways of at least four (4) feet in width shall connect building entrances to the adjacent public sidewalk and to any parking facilities located on the site.
- Transit shelters shall be well lighted, weather protected and shall be placed in locations that promote security.
- Vehicular access and circulation shall be designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrian traffic and surrounding residential uses.
- Traffic shall be directed to minimize impact upon residential properties and shall be subject to section 530.150 (b) related to alley access.
- Site plans shall minimize the use of impervious surfaces.

Conformance:

- All walkways leading to building entrances are more than 4 feet in width. All building entrances are clearly connected to the public realm.

- There are no transit shelters on or adjacent to the site.
- The only curb cut proposed for access to underground parking on this site is actually off-site, as a part of the South Building proposal.
- All areas not needed for buildings, access, loading, or trash and recycling, will be landscaped or paved as a part of proposed courtyards. The applicant is proposing only 13% of the site be impervious surface. R6 districts require at least 15% of the site be impervious. The applicant has agreed to increase the impervious surface on the site to meet the minimum requirement of 15%.

LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING:

- The composition and location of landscaped areas shall complement the scale of the development and its surroundings.
- Not less than twenty (20) percent of the site not occupied by buildings, including all required landscaped yards, shall be landscaped as specified in section 530.160 (a).
- Required screening shall be six (6) feet in height, unless otherwise specified, except in required front yards where such screening shall be three (3) feet in height.
- Except as otherwise provided, required screening shall be at least ninety-five (95) percent opaque throughout the year. Screening shall be satisfied by one or a combination of the following:
 - A decorative fence.
 - A masonry wall.
 - A hedge.
- Parking and loading facilities located along a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway shall comply with section 530.170 (b), including providing landscape yards along a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway and abutting or across an alley from a residence or office residence district, or any permitted or conditional residential use.
- The corners of parking lots where rows of parking spaces leave areas unavailable for parking or vehicular circulation shall be landscaped as specified for a required landscaped yard. Such spaces may include architectural features such as benches, kiosks or bicycle parking.
- In parking lots of ten (10) spaces or more, no parking space shall be located more than fifty (50) feet from the center of an on-site deciduous tree. Tree islands located within the interior of a parking lot shall have a minimum width of seven (7) feet in any direction.
- All other areas not governed by sections 530.160 and 530.170 and not occupied by buildings, parking and loading facilities or driveways, shall be covered with turf grass, native grasses or other perennial flowering plants, vines, mulch, shrubs or trees.
- Installation and maintenance of all landscape materials shall comply with the standards outlined in section 530.210.
- The city planning commission may approve the substitution or reduction of landscaped plant materials, landscaped area or other landscaping or screening standards, subject to section 530.80, as provided in section 530.220.

Conformance:

- The lot area (32,246 sq. ft.) less the building footprint (19,645 sq. ft.) yields a net site of 12,601 sq. ft. The code requires a minimum of 2,520 sq. ft. of landscaping, 6 trees and 26 shrubs. The total landscaping proposed by the applicant is 4,145 sq. ft. This equals 33% of the net site. The proposed project includes 15 trees and 87 shrubs.

- As all parking is provided underground, no associated landscaping or screening requirements exist.
- One shared and one private courtyard is proposed for the site. Landscaping is used heavily throughout both courtyards.

ADDITIONAL STANDARDS:

- All parking lots and driveways shall be designed with wheel stops or discontinuous curbing to provide on-site retention and filtration of stormwater. Where on-site retention and filtration is not practical, the parking lot shall be defined by six (6) inch by six (6) inch continuous concrete curb.
- To the extent practical, site plans shall minimize the blocking of views of important elements of the city.
- To the extent practical, buildings shall be located and arranged to minimize shadowing on public spaces and adjacent properties.
- To the extent practical, buildings shall be located and arranged to minimize the generation of wind currents at ground level.
- Site plans shall include crime prevention design elements as specified in section 530.260 related to:
 - Natural surveillance and visibility
 - Lighting levels
 - Territorial reinforcement and space delineation
 - Natural access control
- To the extent practical, site plans shall include the rehabilitation and integration of locally designated historic structures or structures that have been determined to be eligible to be locally designated. Where rehabilitation is not feasible, the development shall include the reuse of significant features of historic buildings.

Conformance:

- There is no surface parking proposed on the site.
- The project will not block views of important elements of the city nor create any substantive shadows on adjacent buildings and open spaces that do not already exist. The yard provided along W 29th St and the stepping back of the building indicate that shadowing on the Midtown Greenway should not be significant.
- The project would not be expected to contribute significantly to ground-level winds.
- The site design and landscape plan allows views from the public sidewalk into the site.

Alternative Compliance: The Planning Commission or zoning administrator may approve alternatives to any site plan review requirement upon finding any of the following:

- The alternative meets the intent of the site plan chapter and the site plan includes amenities or improvements that address any adverse effects of the alternative. Site amenities may include but are not limited to additional open space, additional landscaping and screening, green roof, decorative pavers, ornamental metal fencing, architectural enhancements, transit facilities, bicycle facilities, preservation of natural resources, restoration of previously damaged natural environment, rehabilitation of existing structures that have been locally designated or have been determined to be eligible to be locally designated as historic structures, and design which is similar in form, scale and materials to existing structures on the site and to surrounding development.
- Strict adherence to the requirements is impractical because of site location or conditions and the proposed alternative meets the intent of this chapter.
- The proposed alternative is consistent with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the city council and meets the intent of this chapter.

Conformance: There are two standards of Chapter 530 that are not being met: blank wall exceeds 25 feet and less than 10% windows are provided on the 5th and 6th floor of the North elevation. Staff does not

recommend alternative compliance for these conditions, but recommends requiring these conditions be met in final plans.

Section B: Conformance with All Applicable Zoning Code Provisions and Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and Applicable Small Area Plans Adopted by the City Council

Zoning Code: The proposed use is permitted in the R6 District, which is being proposed.

Off-Street Parking and Loading: Chapter 541 of the code requires one parking space for each dwelling unit. The applicant is providing 130 underground parking spaces for 98 proposed units.

Maximum Floor Area: The maximum floor area ratio for a multiple-family dwelling in the R6 district is 3.0. With a 20% density bonus for providing all parking underground, the adjusted FAR is 3.6. The applicant proposal results in a floor area ratio of 3.23.

Building Height: Building height in the R6 District is limited to 6 stories not to exceed 84 feet. The proposed building is 6 stories because of a vaulted 5th floor, or a total of 68 feet high. The building starts at 4 stories high on the north end of the site, stepping up to 6 stories away from the Greenway.

Minimum Lot Area: There minimum lot area required of a multi-family building in the R6 District is 400 sq. ft per dwelling unit. With a 20% density bonus for providing all parking underground, the adjusted minimum lot area per dwelling unit is 336 sq. ft. The applicant is requesting a variance to reduce this minimum to 329 sq. ft. See variance finding for staff recommendation.

Dwelling Units per Acre: The applicant is proposing a density of 132 dwelling units per acre.

Yard Requirements: The applicant is requesting three yard variances to reduce yard requirements. See variance findings for staff recommendation.

Specific Development Standards: Not Applicable.

Hours of Operation: Not Applicable

Signs: No signs are proposed at this time. Any signs will require a signage permit and must comply with the requirements of Chapter 543.

Refuse storage: All storage of refuse and recyclable materials will located in a dumpster enclosure in the center of the shared courtyard between the North and South Buildings along the public alley.

Lighting: All lighting must be in compliance with must comply with Chapter 535 and Chapter 541 of the zoning code.

Minneapolis Plan: See finding #1 of the rezoning.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the zoning amendment change from I1 zoning to R6 zoning district:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a zoning amendment to change a large portion of 2900 Aldrich Ave S from a I1 to a R6 zoning district.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the conditional use permit to allow 98 new dwelling units:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a conditional use permit for **96** new dwelling units at 2900 Aldrich Ave S.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the variance to reduce the minimum front yard from 15 to 3 feet:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a variance to reduce the minimum front yard from 15 to 3 feet at 2900 Aldrich Ave S.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the variance to reduce the minimum corner side yard along 29th St from 18 feet to 10 feet:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a variance to reduce the minimum corner side yard along 29th St from 18 feet to 10 feet at 2900 Aldrich Ave S, subject to the following condition:

1. The building will step back from the Greenway and be no more than four stories high at the approved corner side yard boundary.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the variance to reduce the minimum interior side yard along the public alley from 15 to 1 foot:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a variance to reduce the minimum interior side yard along the public alley from 15 to 1 foot at 2900 Aldrich Ave S.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the variance to reduce the Minimum Lot Area from 338 sq. ft. per dwelling unit (with a density bonus) to 321 sq. ft. per dwelling unit, a 5% reduction:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **deny** the application for a variance to reduce the Minimum Lot Area from 336 sq. ft. per dwelling unit (with a density bonus) to 329 sq. ft. per dwelling unit, a 2% reduction, at 2900 Aldrich Ave S.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for a site plan review:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a site plan review at 2900 Aldrich Ave , subject to the following conditions:

1. Some combination of windows and architectural detail will be used to eliminate any blank wall conditions in excess of 25 feet and provide 10% windows on the 5th and 6th floor of the north elevation.
2. Impervious surface on the site will be increased to a minimum of 15% as required by section 546.150 of the code.
3. CPED Planning staff review and approval of the final site and landscaping plans.
4. All site improvements shall be completed by January 12, 2008, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for noncompliance.

Attachments:

1. Statement of use
2. Findings
3. PDR comments
4. Correspondence
5. Travel Demand Management Plan draft
6. Site plans, Elevations, Floor plans, and Zoning map
7. Photos